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# Systemic Perspective of Conduct Disorder in Adolescents

Charmayne Adams

University of Tennessee, Knoxville, [cadams49@vols.utk.edu](mailto:cadams49@vols.utk.edu)

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**1. TITLE:** Systemic Perspective of Conduct Disorder in Adolescents

**2. RELEVANCE:**

**Explain how the proposal relates to one or two (no more than two) of the five strands (\*  
[SEE STRANDS](#))**

**Heart: Social and Emotional Skills**

**§ Fostering social and emotional skills and the social climate for all children and youth.**

The focus of this presentation is on examining conduct disorder from a systemic lens to better target interventions to address the systemic nature of the diagnosis. The symptoms associated with conduct disorder effect far more than the individual diagnosed with them and include poor social interactions, interpersonal aggression, and poor education outcomes. In addition to the social, individual, and community ramifications of individuals diagnosed with conduct disorder, there is also evidence that youth-at-risk, especially urban youth of color, are disproportionately diagnosed with conduct disorder. With the knowledge presented in this sessions individuals will be better equipped to understand what conduct disorder is (and isn't), and the evidence based system practices that are can implemented across settings to support the social and emotional growth of these youth.

**o Health: Mental and Physical Health**

**§ Promoting the mental and physical health of all children and youth**

Conduct Disorder is linked to poor mental health and physical health outcomes for the youth who fit criteria for the diagnosis. This presentation utilizes Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (Bronnfenbrenner, 1981) to highlight the multilayer effects that this diagnosis can have including increased risk of injury to self and others, in addition to a large burden on families and communities. Individuals attending this session will gain a better understanding of the mental health diagnosis of conduct disorder, the most recent neurobiological understanding that we have concerning emotional regulation and impulse control, and how this affects youth and the communities they live in. Individuals working in all settings with youth-at-risk should have an understanding of this extremely common diagnosis and what it means for the youth in their lives.

**3. BRIEF DESCRIPTION:**

**Write an informative and interesting description of your presentation in 30 to 60 words; include specific objective(s), topics(s), and target audience. (If accepted, this description will be used in the conference program.)**

This presentation explores the systemic nature of conduct disorder and the effect it has on individuals, educational settings, and communities. It address the systemic nature of the diagnosis through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model and looks at interventions for each layer of the model. This presentation also acknowledges the disproportionate rate of youth-at-risk, especially male youth of color diagnosed with conduct disorder.

#### **4. SUMMARY:**

**Summarize proposal in 250 to 350 words. Preference will be given to proposals that describe practical models, programs, methods, strategies, or practices and provide “take home” learning opportunities for participants. Session presentations must not include advertisements for books, products, programs, or services.**

Conduct disorder has become an increasing burden on families, communities, and school systems in the United States (Barry, Golmaryami, Rivera-Hudson, & Frick, 2013; Baker, 2009). Conduct disorder has been associated with an increase in rates of injury, vehicular accidents, poor educational outcomes, interpersonal aggression, and is a predictor of future violent behavior (Henggeler, Cunningham, Pickrel, Schoenwald, & Brondino, 1996; Potter, 2014; Barry, Golmaryami, Rivera-Hudson, & Frick, 2013). It is imperative that valid, reliable, and consistent screening and interventions for this disorder are available and utilized. This article addresses the systemic nature of the symptomology and interventions most effective with conduct disorder. A case study is utilized to highlight Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1981) and how it can be used as a tool to conceptualize the systematic natural of conduct disorder.

Conduct disorder is a clinical diagnosis that is seen regularly in community mental health and educational settings, especially serving urban youth (Von Sydow, Retzlaff, Beher, Haun, & Schweitzer, 2013). Conduct disorder in broad terms is a pattern of behavior exhibited by an individual that harms property, persons, or animals; this pattern of behavior is habitual and exhibited in many domains of the youth’s life (Von Sydow et al., 2013) The systematic effects of conduct disorder are evident in the fair reaching damage that can be caused by the symptomology which is characterized by the violation of the rights of others. It is also helpful to conceptualize the assessment methods from a systems perspective. One of the most common methods of assessing conduct disorder is a multi-informant approach which seeks to have input across settings in the youth’s life (Barry, Golmaryami, Rivera-Hudson & Frick, 2013). The most effective forms of intervention for conduct disorder currently involve multifaceted interventions that include stakeholders in multiple settings of the youth’s life intervening in a consistent manner (Barry, Golmaryami, Rivera-Hudson & Frick, 2013; Von Sydow, et al., 2013; Frick, 2001; Borduin et. Al., 1995; Henggeler, Melton, & Smith, 1992; Scherer, Brondino, Henggeler, & Melton, 1994; Cone, et al., 1995;).

#### **5. EVIDENCE:**

**Describe evidence that demonstrates the field-tested effectiveness of the proposed solution or approach. Explain how the proposal is based on known research and promising practices.**

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- McKenzie, M. E., & Lee, S. S. (2014). Cognitive Ability and Psychopathic Traits: Independent and Interactive Associations with Youth Conduct Problems. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*. doi:10.1007/s10802-014-9932-3
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- Von Sydow, K., Retzlaff, R., Beher, S., Haun, M. W., & Schweitzer, J. (2013). The Efficacy of Systemic Therapy for Childhood and Adolescent Externalizing

Disorders: A Systematic Review of 47 RCT. *Family Process*, 52(4), 576–618.  
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#### **6. FORMAT:**

**Select preferred presentation format (individual presentation to a group of 50–70, OR poster presentation). Poster presentations will provide an opportunity for interaction and consultation with conference attendees. These presentations should feature visual aids and handouts.**

Individual presentation

#### **7. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:**

**Provide brief biographical information about relevant professional experience.(FOR EACH PRESENTER)**

Charmayne Adams is a clinical mental health counselor and a 2nd year doctoral student in the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Counselor Education program. She has worked with youth-at-risk in many capacities including in schools, in-patient, and community mental health settings. She presented last year at this conference on emotional regulation and attachment, which is an additional research interest of hers. Charmayne has found a passion in the intersection between counseling and social justice issues, especially those concerning individuals who have been victims of traumatic experience. Her hope is to engage colleagues and students in the national conversation on race, ethnicity, and role of counselors as advocates for change.

#### **8. CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Provide address, phone, fax, and email.

2832 Dodd St, Knoxville, TN, 37920

616-308-4822

cadams49@vols.utk.edu